Permission to expeditions in the Siachen Glacier area

*403. SHRI J. K. JAIN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted any expeditions during the current calendar year in the Siachen Glacier area in Ladakh;

(b) if so, by whom these expeditions were sponsored and what was their composition; and

(c) what is the number of expeditions claimed to have succeeded in scaling peaks in the area?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b) Government have given permission to two mountaineering expeditions to peaks in the Siachen Glacier area during the current calendar year. The first expedition was organised jointly by the British Alpine Club, UK and 'Mountaineers', a mountaineering club of Bombay. The team consisted of 5 British nationals and 6 Indians. The second expedition has been organised jointly by the Himalayan Association of Japan and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police The team consists of 6 Japanese and 7 Indians. Besides these, an Army expedition also went to the area.

(c) The first expedition has succeeded in scaling six peaks in the area. The second expedition is yet to climb a peak. The Army expedition scaled one peak.

Contract to a foreign firm for desalination equipment by the Gujarat Electricity Board

*404. SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA:
SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gujarat Electricity Board has opted for a French Company, ignoring an Indian company ION Exchange, for desalination of water project being set up at Panandro in Gujarat.

(b) what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to cancel the contract?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) According to Gujarat Electricity Board (GEB) they had invited global tenders for the water treatment plant. GEB found the offer of a French company, M/s. Degremont, to be technically the most suitable and the lowest in price, as compared with other tenders, including the tender of M/s. ION Exchange who have collaboration with an American Company. This conclusion has been supported by all the appraisal agencies concerned.

(c) No, Sir.

Mental health facilities in the country

*405. SHRI J. P. GOYAL:
SHRI RAMCHANDRA BHARADWAJ:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the facilities for mental disorder patients in the country are meagre and that hardly 10 per cent are receiving the help with the existing services; and

(b) if so, what are Government's plans to provide basic mental health facilities?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) and (b) Facilities for mental health counselling and treatment are available in Mental Hospitals/Institutions as well as in General Hospitals in most of the States. Taking into account the needs of all the persons requiring assistance for all types of mental disequilibrium, such facilities often fall short of the total requirements. Plans to develop a structural frame work aimed at providing the basic mental health facilities, through community outreach programmes are contemplated within the resources and priorities of the Seventh Five Year Plan period.